

TOP SECRET

31 January 1958

PROJECT AQUATONE

OPERATIONAL CONCEPT - WINTER/SPRING 1958

1. Objectives: Primary objective of the proposed operations is to obtain coverage of extremely high priority targets in the USSR which for operational planning have been grouped into some 13 areas each having homogeneous weather. Three of these have been determined to have top priority. Four areas can best be reached from Turkey, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The secondary objective is to obtain as much useful coverage as possible outside of the primary target areas without increasing the total number of missions for this purpose or incurring additional risks.

2. Restrictions:

a. RAINBOW covered aircraft will be employed on all missions with the exception of two areas in eastern central Siberia where the range of aircraft thus equipped is insufficient [REDACTED]

b. Missions will be compressed into as short a time period as feasible after operations have been initiated.

c. Operations will be initiated as soon as RAINBOW equipped aircraft are available, since it must be assumed that with the passage of time the risk of interception will increase.

3. Weather: The target areas have been defined on the basis of prevailing climatic patterns in such a way that the same weather may be expected to prevail over all of the targets in any one area. Thus each area should be coverable with a single mission. Opportunities may even arise to cover two areas on the same mission. Broadly speaking, during the first six months of the calendar year the largest amount of clear weather occurs over the several target areas at the following times:

Far East excluding KAMCHATKA -- February and March

KAMCHATKA -- April

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Central Siberia -- February and March

TYURA TAM -- April and May

Western Russia excluding WHITE SEA area -- March, with
May as second choice

WHITE SEA Area -- April through June

4. Equipment: Two aircraft without RAINBOW covering are already in place in the Far East and three at Adana. One RAINBOW equipped aircraft can be available in the Far East by 25 February and two thus equipped in Adana by 15 March. Two additional RAINBOW aircraft will be available in late March for allocation to either Detachment as required. These numbers are believed adequate to support the operations outlined below, and it is anticipated that, after the delivery dates indicated, weather will be the limiting factor on the rate of operation.

5. Operational Concept: Operations will be conducted in the four phases given below. Specific target areas will be selected and missions planned on the basis of forecast weather, and no mission will be launched if the weather forecast for the target area is marginal or if the forecast carries a high degree of uncertainty.

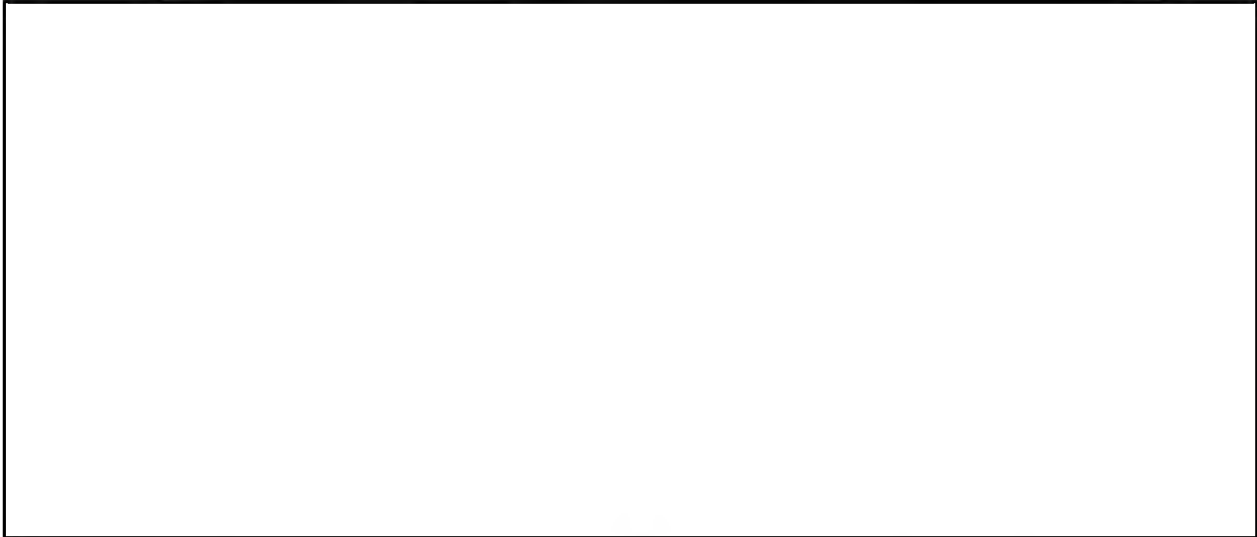
a. A preliminary mission, designed in part to probe Russian defenses, will be undertaken in the Far East as soon as a RAINBOW aircraft is available. The target will be selected and the mission planned in such a way as to involve a relatively shallow (300 to 500 miles) penetration over territory which is for the most part sparsely inhabited. (The most probable targets are KOMSOMOLSK or UKRANIA.)

b. Upon the successful completion of this mission and in the absence of any evidence of an increased Soviet interception capability, missions will be conducted against the three top priority target areas referred to in paragraph 1. above. In order to maximize the chance of securing this essential coverage, no other overflights will be undertaken (except as provided in paragraph 5. c. below) until these three missions have been accomplished.

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d. Missions will be conducted against the remaining target areas after the completion of the three missions called for in paragraph 5.b. above. It is anticipated that the last missions to be launched will be those against KAMCHATKA, the WHITE SEA and a possible third far northern area. [REDACTED]

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6. Timing: It is believed that the preliminary mission (phase one) can be carried out in late February, that coverage of the three top priority areas can probably be completed in March, and that the whole program can be completed by 20/30 April. The total time span would of course be shorter but for the determination to wait for the completion of the three top priority missions before embarking on others [REDACTED]

7. Future Planning: Upon the conclusion of the above operations, the prospects for this activity will be re-examined with particular reference to: new or outstanding requirements for reconnaissance, intelligence then available on Russian interception capabilities, and the status of developments which might reduce the vulnerability to interception. On the basis of this study plans for the future of the activity will be formulated and will be reviewed with higher authority.

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